



RSVP Connections

Connecting Senior Volunteers with Community Needs

January 2005

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Dear RSVP Volunteers and Friends,

Happy New Year!

The last months of 2004 were difficult ones in Erie County—especially related to the County's budget crisis. Like the infamous Blizzard of '77, we found ourselves again in the news across the country and even across the world.

I have focused this first newsletter of 2005 on another regional happening that also merits national attention—and gives us reason to celebrate! Buffalo is becoming known as a center of the arts and great architecture as much as the occasional blizzard. As Buffalo News reporter Donn Esmonde wrote about the restoration of Frank Lloyd Wright's Darwin Martin House complex near Delaware Park: "It's the centerpiece of a cultural tourism bounty that makes larger cities weep with envy... We've got a handful of Wright-designed houses in the city, Hamburg's Graycliff and the coming Wright boathouse and gas station. With masterpieces by the rest of America's "Big Three" architects - Louis Sullivan and H.H. Richardson - plus everything else, we've got enough culture to choke an art critic."

Our architectural treasures, in addition to our museums, philharmonic orchestra, theaters, Olmstead Parks system, and even the grain elevators that line our waterfront have put us in the category of "cultural heritage destinations" for a growing tourism industry. Volunteers are the muscle and manpower, and the imagination and spark of creativity that makes the vision of restoring our world-class architectural treasures a reality. Volunteers become part of the continuing history of these beautiful landmarks. There is still much work to be done to preserve our heritage for the enjoyment of visitors, residents, and generations to come. Individuals who love history, design, public speaking, or even washing windows, please consider adding your talents to these cultural institutions and treasures of WNY, and bring along a like-minded friend!

Pat Dowling

RSVP Director

P.S. A heartfelt thank you to all RSVP volunteers from the RSVP staff and Advisory Council for your understanding and graciousness in response to the notice about the new transportation assistance policy. It was very difficult to send out the notice just before the holidays to our volunteers, who are so generous with giving their time and talent throughout the year. The RSVP office has received quite a few calls from volunteers who have decided to forego mileage reimbursement in order to increase reimbursement funds available for other volunteers in financial need. Your generous spirit shows in so many ways!

Building WNY's Future on Historic Foundations

The Darwin D. Martin House

In the quiet Parkside neighborhood, not far from the Buffalo Zoo, stands a house that was ignored for years, and then re-discovered, and finally designated as a national landmark. It is now the focus of Western New York's ascent to becoming a destination for cultural tourism and a center of great architecture. The building, the Darwin D. Martin House, has been called one of Frank Lloyd Wright's finest residential works and a prime example of his "Prairie House" ideal. The house was designed and built between 1904 and 1905 for the family of Darwin D. Martin, who was Secretary of the Larkin Soap Company and one of Buffalo's millionaire businessmen at the turn of the last century. Frank Lloyd



Wright was just 35 years old when Darwin Martin commissioned him and brought him to Buffalo.

The Martin House Restoration Corporation is in charge of the \$30 million restoration of the main 15,000 square foot Martin house, and the reconstruction of three additional buildings—a pergola, a conservatory, and a carriage house—that were demolished more than 40 years ago. They were integral parts of the original five-structure Martin House complex, designed by Wright as an integrated whole work. Buffalo is the first city ever to rebuild major authentic Frank Lloyd Wright buildings lost to demolition. The Mar-

tin House Restoration Corporation is also preparing to construct a visitors' center adjoining the Martin House.

Almost 8,000 visitors came to the Darwin Martin House last year, and it is anticipated that there will be a dramatic increase as the restoration nears completion and draws even more national and international attention. Similarly, there will be a growing need for dedicated and trained volunteers to be a part of the support team. Since 1996, volunteers have played an active role in every aspect of the journey toward the restoration of the Martin complex. New volunteers are welcomed by the staff and seasoned volunteers as a source of new and creative ideas.

Currently 60 trained docents lead tours of the house, but Margie Stehlik, Director of the Martin House volunteers, estimates that with the forecasted increase in visitors, several hundred docents will be needed! Docents must complete a 12-week course and a period of apprenticeship as volunteer chaperones, accompanying all visitors on tours of the Martin House. A tour lasts about 75 minutes, and involves climbing a number of flights of stairs. Volunteers also operate the gift shop, located next door in the Barton House on Summit Avenue (also a Frank Lloyd Wright design).

There are other unique volunteer opportunities to fit the skills and interests of almost anyone who wants to join in this exciting project. Volunteers who enjoy writing or editing can assist staff in grant writing and developing publications. Volunteers who speak languages other than English are needed as interpreters during tours. Volunteers in the education outreach program work with local teachers to develop curricula and coordinate learning experiences for students at the Martin House. Speakers' bureau volunteers bring a slide show presentation about Frank Lloyd Wright and the Martin House to schools and community groups. Volunteers who enjoy clerical work and data entry are welcomed by the staff to as-

sist with compiling reports, mailings, and other daily tasks. Volunteers provide hospitality at special events such as the annual concert, fundraisers, and architectural seminars. Volunteers with a green thumb work to restore the historic landscape. Volunteers with carpentry skills are needed by the Martin House curator to build crates for various artifacts, such as the world-famous Wright designed windows, furniture, and other items. Volunteers can assist with fund raising and development projects. Volunteers also provide leadership for other volunteers through their service on the Volunteer Steering Committee.

A high-spirited, mission-focused, action-oriented, entrepreneurial culture is the essence of the Martin House Project, and your gifts and talents will be welcomed to this renewal, restoration, and rebirth. Call RSVP at 858-7548.

Graycliff

Drive south past Woodlawn and Derby on Old Lake Shore Road, and you will glimpse some of the estates built as summer houses by prominent Buffalo families of old. In these beautiful homes facing Lake Erie, the families enjoyed cooling breezes, beautiful sunsets, and opportunities for boating and swimming. The row of lakefront estates includes Graycliff, the former summer home of the Darwin Martin family. Like their house on Jewett Parkway, this “lakeside cottage” was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, yet the house’s design bears testimony to the influence of Isabel Martin, Darwin’s wife. She disliked the interior darkness of the prairie style house in the city, and asked for a house that would be open to the summer sun and the lake breezes. At her request, Frank Lloyd Wright’s design for Graycliff included many windows and a view of the lake in each room.

The Martin family enjoyed several summers at Graycliff, and then sold the house. Over the years, Graycliff was modified to suit the needs of its owners. The last owners, a group of Catholic Piarist priests operated a school on the grounds, and added a chapel, but made no major structural changes, therefore preserving the integrity of the house.



In 1997, a volunteer named Carol Bronnenkant took the first steps toward saving and restoring Graycliff... Carol was told by her fellow docents at the Darwin Martin house about the pending sale of a Frank Lloyd Wright house in the Southtowns. Carol and her family toured the property, and she immediately fell in love with the house. Despite the obvious deterioration of the buildings, she decided that she would do whatever was necessary in order to save this architectural treasure from being lost. Carol put out an invitation to the community for a meeting of anyone interested in the fate of Graycliff. More than 100 people came to the meeting, and from this meeting started the Graycliff Conservancy. This dedicated army of volunteers have worked tirelessly during the past six years on everything from managing the restoration, conducting public tours, maintaining the 8.4 acre complex, running special events, marketing the site as a heritage attraction, and operating the gift shop.

Graycliff’s season runs from mid-April through mid-November. Last year, close to 10,000 visitors toured the grounds and even more are anticipated to visit during the upcoming year. Volunteers interested in becoming a part of the renaissance of Graycliff have a variety of roles to choose from... Volunteers who enjoy public speaking and teaching can take the 6-week course to become a docent. Volunteer gardeners are welcomed to

assist with planting and watering flowerbeds, raking leaves, mowing the lawns, and other tasks to bring the landscape back to its original design. Volunteers are needed to assist with the gift shop, greet visitors, make reservations for tours, and give directions to other tourist attractions in the area. Volunteers who enjoy telephone work can help to schedule other volunteers for the tasks described above. Finally, volunteers are needed to vacuum away the spider webs and wash all those windows that Isabel Larkin requested of the famous Mr. Wright!

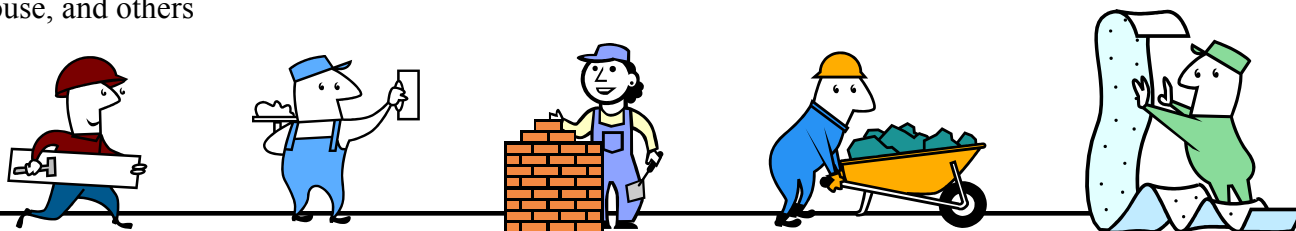
The Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier

We often don't appreciate the treasures we have in our own hometowns. We may pass a building every day but not recognize it as a beautiful and architecturally significant part of our region's historical landscape, while visitors from out of town are awestruck by our area's magnificent churches, office buildings, houses, grain elevators and other structures. We also often don't realize the hard work involved in the preservation of these landmarks, such as advocating for policies to protect a landmark from demolition; raising funds to repair structural damage and restore the building; education to raise awareness about the importance of landmarks; as well as the actual labor on the building and grounds. Volunteers who have a passion for history or architecture, who enjoy public speaking, and those interested in the preservation movement are welcomed at the Landmark Society.

The local historic preservation movement began in the City of Buffalo in 1969, when a group of concerned citizens formed the Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier and purchased the oldest Federal-style house in Buffalo, the 1818 Coit House, then vacant and slated for demolition. The Landmark Society's leadership to save the Coit House secured it a permanent seat on the Buffalo Preservation Board. The Society works closely with others committed to the preservation of this region's historic fabric by enhancing appreciation of the built and natural landmarks within the communities of the eight counties of WNY, and the Niagara Peninsula of Ontario, and is encouraging greater collaboration among the various preservation groups.

The Landmark Society's activities are varied and include:

- Helping to save some of our community's outstanding buildings, including the Old U.S. Post Office/ECC City Campus, the Birge House, the Guaranty Building, the William-Pratt House, the Seymour H. Knox House, and others



Want to build a house? Do you enjoy swinging a hammer, measuring a board, or handling a paintbrush? Want to learn new skills??

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, RSVP's newest community partner, seeks volunteers to join its mission to lend a helping hand to families who otherwise would be unable to achieve their dream of ownership of a simple decent house.

Volunteers work at supervised sites in the City of Buffalo Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9am-3pm. Training and supplies are provided.

Give a few hours, or give a lot...Call RSVP at 858-7548..

- Maintaining the website, www.landmark-niagara.org, which includes a calendar of all preservation activities and events taking place within the Niagara Region. A quarterly newsletter is also published.
- A weekly series of Tuesday noontime lectures on area architecture, history, culture, and art in the Buffalo Architecture Center located within the Visitors' Center / Market Arcade building at 617 Main Street, and a bi-weekly series of Thursday noontime lectures in the Niagara Art & Cultural Center (formerly Niagara Falls High School)
- Walking tours to downtown Buffalo landmarks; Beginning June 2005, through September, a series of themed, "Spirit of Buffalo Downtown Walking Tours" every Tuesday
- Efforts to raise \$80,000 to purchase at auction two Frank Lloyd Wright-designed windows that had been removed from the Darwin Martin house, for eventual re-installation .

One of the most visible projects is restoration of the Warren and Polly Hull House, a stone farmhouse located on Genesee Street in Lancaster, built in 1810 by Revolutionary War veteran Warren Hull. The Hull House Restoration Committee welcomes volunteers' involvement at the house, ranging from actual restoration work to providing hospitality at special events.

An **urgent call** is in place for a total of 25 volunteers interested in being trained as docents to lead the Monday through Friday tours of City Hall, scheduled from 12 noon to 1 p.m. beginning in April. Volunteers would commit to one tour per month. Contact the RSVP Office at 858-7548 to discuss your availability for training beginning in February.

You're Invited -

Seniors for Seniors - Basketball Game 2/20/05

Senior Services joins Blue Cross/Blue Shield of WNY and Canisius College in inviting you to attend a very special basketball game on Sunday 2/20/05 at 2 pm at the Canisius College Koessler Athletic Center at Main St. & Delavan. Canisius College's Golden Griffins host Loyola College of Baltimore in the last regular season home game for Canisius' senior players. There will be special ticket prices for seniors, give-aways at the door, and more to celebrate this special game. Tickets are available by calling Todd Hummel at the Canisius box office - 888-2885, or for more information about this special Seniors for Seniors game, call John Maddock, Associate Athletic Director, at 888-1110.

Town Hall Meeting for Aging-Related Issues 2/25/05

New York State elected officials are invited to hear about issues and concerns of senior citizens in WNY. The location will be at Cheektowaga Senior Center, and more details will be available at the Network in Aging of WNY website – www.networkinaging.com

NEED MORE RSVP IN YOUR LIFE? JOIN THE RSVP ADVISORY COUNCIL!

The RSVP Advisory Council is looking for a few good volunteers! The Council's Nominating Committee is taking names of individuals who would like to get involved in setting the direction of RSVP. The RSVP Advisory Council consists of 15 members who meet with the RSVP Director on a monthly basis to provide input about specific program concerns and opportunities. The Council includes both volunteers, volunteer station supervisors, and other community leaders.

Advisory Council members serve for a two-year term. One of the "perks" of being an Advisory Council member is that meetings are rotated each month to a different RSVP volunteer site. During the past two years, we've had a meeting in the Buffalo Zoo's conference room with a view of the bison area; in the captain's quarters on board the USS The Sullivans, and at Graycliff, overlooking Lake Erie on a beautiful summer day. In this way, Council members get a better understanding of the volunteers' contributions at each of the sites. Council members also serve on at least one committee → →

SEPTEMBER

ANSELL, JANET C. - CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
BORNGRABER, CLARK H. - RURAL TRANSIT
ECKERT, DIANE J. - BUFFALO ZOO
FITZGERALD, RICHARD W. - JOURNEY'S END, KEN-TON MEALS ON WHEELS & AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY
GROVE, GAIL A. - BROTHERS OF MERCY
SAUER, MABELLE L. - AMHERST SENIOR CENTER
SLOAN, ELAINE A. - BEAVER MEADOW
WALSH, DAVID H. & SHARON V. - BEAVER MEADOW & RESPONSE TO LOVE
ZUCKER, RHODA T. - B&EC LIBRARY

OCTOBER

ANDRZEJEWSKI, CASEY J. - CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
BALON, DANIEL R. - VA HOSPITAL
BUCKLEY, DONALD P. & NANCY H. - B&EC MEALS ON WHEELS
CARPENTER, JACQUELINE A. - CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
D'ONOFRIO, ANNA F. - CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
ELLIS, HAZEL H. & RICHARD L. - CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
EUSTACE, JAMES F. - VA HOSPITAL
EVOY, JUDITH R. E.C. - SENIOR FITNESS & SOUTHTOWNS MOW
FERRARI, SHELAGH P. - CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
FISH, GRETA E. - BERTRAND CHAFFEE HOSPITAL
FRANKLIN, LeROY A. - ROSWELL PARK
GROVE, JAMES K. - CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
HATHI, MANJULA M. - AMERICAN CANCER & AMHERST SENIOR CENTER
KLESS, DENNIS A. - NIAGARA FRONTIER RADIO/READING
KUCZKA, JOHN P. - COMO PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MONACELLI, GILBERT C. & SHIRLEY A. - AMHERST SENIOR CENTER
NEWTON, RONALD P. - ST VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY-FOOD PANTRY
O'NEILL, ROBERT N. - CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
OCHAL, JAMES A. - VA HOSPITAL
ODACHOWSKI, JOHN - VA HOSPITAL
OGLIVIE, JAMES W. - ST VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY
PASCUCCI, MARY LOU - GRAND ISLAND SENIOR CENTER
RATHMAN, RICHARD C. - ERIE COUNTY SENIOR FITNESS
RICHTER, ARMIN J. - AMHERST SENIOR CENTER
SWITALSKI, WANDA E. - MARTIN HOUSE RESTORATION
VITO, JANET A. & LAWRENCE J. - CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
WAHL, MARY ANN - CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
WHITEHEAD, BARBARA J. & ROBERT D. - AMHERST SENIOR CENTER
ZAWISLAK, FRANK E. - RURAL TRANSIT
ZELAZNY, BEVERLY - AMHERST SENIOR CENTER

Leadership Development – identifies individuals to serve on the Advisory Council and in other leadership positions

Resource Development – ensures the program’s sustainability through long-range planning for both financial, in-kind and human resources

Program Evaluation – determines areas for future program development, and conducts evaluations of the program’s effectiveness.

Recognition – assists with planning and implementing the annual Tribute Day event and other ongoing recognition of RSVP volunteers.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Advisory Council, or would like to nominate yourself or someone you know for membership, please call the RSVP office at 858-7548.

NOVEMBER

ARNO, RICHARD M. - RURAL TRANSIT
BARBER, RICKIE - ERIE COUNTY SENIOR FITNESS
BERST, MARSHA A. - WEST SENECA SENIOR CENTER
BULGER, GEORGE L. - UNION EAST ELEMENTARY
BUSHEN, KATHY - RURAL TRANSIT
CASEY, JOAN M. - MERCY HOSPITAL
CERIANI, VIRGINIA - WEST SENECA SENIOR CENTER
CHASE, VERONICA A. - LOVEJOY CAREGIVERS
CHURCHILL, DUANE E. - MARTIN HOUSE RESTORATION
COLELLO, FLORENCE J. - B&EC BOTANICAL GARDENS
HEIMANN, CHARLEEN R. - B&EC MEALS ON WHEELS & CLARENCE SENIOR CENTER
LACZ, BERNADINE A. - GARDEN GATE & ALZHEIMERS ASSOCIATION
MADAR, RUTH A. - E.C. SENIOR FITNESS
MANN, JACQUELINE M. - FOOD SHUTTLE
MARRANCA, ROSANNE F. - ERIE COUNTY SENIOR FITNESS
McDONNELL, ELIZABETH C. - MERCY HOSPITAL
O'BRIEN, GERALDINE W. - B&EC BOTANICAL GARDENS
O'CONNOR, PATRICIA A. - RURAL TRANSIT
RETTEW, ANNA S. - COMO PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SING, RUTH M. - FLETCHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SIRAGUSE, SHARON M. - WNY CHILDREN'S PSYCHIATRIC CENTER
WHIELDON, MURIEL J. - B&EC BOTANICAL GARDENS & NIAGARA FRONTIER RADIO READING

DECEMBER

BLAIR, KATHLEEN A. - CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
FRANK, JOAN Q. - E.C. SENIOR FITNESS
LESSER, GARY L. - E.C. SENIOR FITNESS & B&EC MEALS ON WHEELS
MAMMOSER, OLIVE V. - HAMBURG CENTRAL SCHOOL
METLAK, MICHAEL J. - VA HOSPITAL
SCHULTZ, RONALD W. - B&EC MEALS ON WHEELS

Do you have questions about Medicare? Insurance? The new prescription discount cards?

Erie County Department of Senior Services can help—Call 858-8526.

Information about many programs and services are also available on the web at
www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices

RSVP extends congratulations to two of our RSVP community partner agencies that recently received awards recognizing their service to the community. In both programs, volunteers provide the backbone of service delivery:



The volunteer program of **Amherst Senior Center's** collaboration with **Literacy Volunteers of Buffalo & Erie County** received the 2004 Senior Services Achievement Award for Community Partnerships, sponsored by the NYS Coalition on Aging, Inc.. The award recognized the agencies' establishment of the area's first drop-in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) literacy center at the Amherst Senior Center. The program has trained 50 Amherst senior volunteers as tutors, who have worked with over 65 ESOL students.

Meals on Wheels of Buffalo and Erie County received the 2004 "Program Award of Excellence" at the Network in Aging's 24th Annual Meeting on October 28, 2004. Meals on Wheels provides food and friendship daily to thousands of homebound elderly and handicapped residents.



Become an insurance expert, and then help others: The **Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)** is looking for volunteer counselors to help people understand health insurance and long term care insurance options. The new Medicare changes for 2006 will confuse a lot of people—You'll be able to explain the complexities to others and give them the information needed to make wise decisions. Training and certification is provided. You can make your own counseling hours—Work at a senior center near you. Call RSVP at 858-7548.

TIMESHEET REMINDERS: RSVP timesheets are **very important** in meeting requirements to document the effectiveness of RSVP in meeting needs in Erie County. All volunteers must fill out timesheets completely and accurately:

1. Fill in the date (month, day, year) each day you volunteer, with the hours you start and end each day. Do not put one date with total hours for a week.
2. Sign your name at the bottom of the timesheet before it is sent to the RSVP office. Your volunteer station supervisor signs his/her name at the top of the timesheet.

It is not necessary to total up monthly hours - the RSVP staff will calculate this for you.

RSVP of Erie County
Dept. of Senior Services
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